2018 Great Southern and Esperance-Ravensthorpe Labour Market Review
For all enquiries regarding this document please email: rwd@dtwd.wa.gov.au
CONTENTS

1 BACKGROUND ........................................................................................................................................... 4
2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .......................................................................................................................... 5
3 GREAT SOUTHERN REGION ...................................................................................................................... 9
   3.1 GREAT SOUTHERN REVIEW FINDINGS ............................................................................................... 9
   3.2 TRAINING IN THE GREAT SOUTHERN ............................................................................................... 12
   3.3 2018 LIST OF OCCUPATIONS DIFFICULT TO FILL IN THE GREAT SOUTHERN ......................... 14
   3.4 GREAT SOUTHERN ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET – A SNAPSHOT ....................................... 23
       Economy .................................................................................................................................................. 23
       Population .......................................................................................................................................... 24
       Employment ....................................................................................................................................... 25
4 ESPERANCE-RAVENSTHORPE REGION .................................................................................................... 31
   4.1 ESPERANCE-RAVENSTHORPE - REVIEW FINDINGS ..................................................................... 31
   4.2 TRAINING IN THE ESPERANCE-RAVENSTHORPE REGION ............................................................. 35
   4.3 2018 LIST OF OCCUPATIONS DIFFICULT TO FILL IN THE ESPERANCE/RAVENSTHORPE REGION .................................................................................................................. 37
   4.4 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET – A SNAPSHOT ....................................................................... 43
       Economy ................................................................................................................................................ 43
       Population .......................................................................................................................................... 45
       Employment ....................................................................................................................................... 47
5 METHODOLOGY ....................................................................................................................................... 51
6 CONCLUDING REMARKS .......................................................................................................................... 53
7 APPENDIX A - CONSULTATION LIST FOR GREAT SOUTHERN AND ESPERANCE LABOUR MARKET REVIEW .................................................................................................................. 54
1 BACKGROUND

In its *Plan for Jobs*, the State Government has committed to ensuring “the State Priority Occupation List will be more responsive to the employment needs of the regions, and ensure regional TAFEs are delivering training that aligns with future job growth in the regions.”¹

While the State Priority Occupation List (SPOL) is based on a robust methodology which provides the necessary evidence to guide training and workforce planning priorities at a whole-of-State level, it is not fit for purpose to identify occupational priorities at a regional level. This is due to a lack of available regional level occupational demand and supply data.

In order to implement the Government’s commitment, the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) is undertaking an annual labour market review of each region to provide a basis for the development of a list of occupations that are difficult to fill for each region. This list is aimed at providing information to the DTWD and regional TAFE colleges which will inform training delivery that aligns with the region’s labour market.

In addition, the labour market reviews aim to inform the DTWD, TAFE colleges and industry and community stakeholders on current and future labour market trends, current attraction and retention issues being experienced by employers, and education and training issues identified in each region. Other stakeholders such as the Jobs and Skill Centres, Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and other Commonwealth agencies may find the report relevant to their work.

The labour market review covered by this report relates to the Great Southern region and Esperance². For the purpose of this labour market review (the Review), the Great Southern region incorporates the City of Albany, the Shires of Denmark, Katanning, Kojonup and Plantagenet.

While Esperance is part of the Goldfields-Esperance region under the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*, the review of the Esperance sub-region has been undertaken concurrently with the Great Southern region as both regions fall within the coverage of South Regional TAFE.

The findings for the Great Southern region and Esperance are presented separately within this report³.

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¹ *WA Labor Plan for Jobs*, p97
² The Esperance labour market review incorporated Ravensthorpe.
³ This report can be accessed from [dtwd.wa.gov.au/workforce-development](http://dtwd.wa.gov.au/workforce-development)
2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Southern and Esperance Labour Market Review (the Review) was conducted by DTWD between February and July 2018, with a total of 128 employer and stakeholder consultations. These included face-to-face and telephone discussions in Albany, Denmark, Katanning, Mt Barker, Kojonup, Esperance and Perth.

Great Southern Region

The Great Southern region has an ageing population and an older workforce which is higher than the State average. The region also has a low unemployment rate of 4.3%, which is below the State average of 5.9%.

Employers and stakeholders in the Great Southern were generally positive about the region’s economy and its potential for future growth, in particular for industries such as primary production, health, and education and training.

Employers indicated there was a preference for employing locals. While skills shortages were not referred to by employers or stakeholders, many employers reported they had experienced difficulties in recruiting staff for specific occupations, often needing to recruit workers from outside the region.

There were 97 occupations identified as being either difficult or somewhat difficult to fill in the Great Southern region, and of these, 41.2% were difficult to fill locally. Over 50% of those occupations were professionals, technicians and trade workers.

Anecdotal feedback suggested individuals in the region may not be necessarily seeking full time employment, but were taking up part time employment to meet their lifestyle choice. This is supported by the Census 2016, which indicates the region has a higher percentage of residents working part time compared to the State.

Other workforce issues impacting on the attraction and retention of workers in the region included the availability of local education and training options for more specialised occupations. A number of employers and stakeholders interviewed commented young people often left the region to pursue training and employment opportunities in Perth or in other regions. An ageing workforce and the reluctance of people to move to the region for employment (rather than for lifestyle reasons) were also reported to be impacting on the region’s workforce.

Training not currently delivered locally, but considered important for industries in the region, included training related to truck driving, auto body repair and security operations. The Review also pointed to the increased need for aged care and other health and community services training in the future.

South Regional TAFE (SRT) has indicated feedback gathered during the Review will guide planning to ensure training delivery aligns with the needs of the region’s employers and industries.

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4 These were for occupations where employers could not recruit anyone from Western Australia and/or could not recruit anyone from the region, but could recruit from Perth or another region.
## Key findings of the Great Southern labour market review

- Employers and stakeholders were generally positive about the region and its prospects for future economic growth;
- Employers identified 97 occupations as being difficult or somewhat difficult to fill, with 41% of those occupations being difficult to fill locally;
- Employers cited the following recruitment issues:
  - not enough people applying for positions;
  - lack of relevant skills and experience of candidates; and
  - remoteness.
- Other issues impacting on the region’s workforce include:
  - a low unemployment rate of 4.3% in the region compared to the State average of 5.9%;
  - an ageing workforce which is higher than the State average;
  - young people leaving the region to pursue other training and employment opportunities, with many returning later to raise their families for lifestyle reasons;
  - many residents have a preference for part time work, rather than full time to meet their lifestyle choices; and
  - high Aboriginal unemployment with more young Aboriginal people moving into the working age range.
- With an ageing population and the imminent roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) there is an increased need for aged care, and home and community care workers and associated training.
- Training services provided by SRT’s Albany campus and private training providers in the region were viewed favourably by employers, with employers being generally satisfied with the quality of training provided.
- SRT has indicated that the review will be a useful as a planning tool for future training delivery.
- Where perceived training gaps were identified by stakeholders, SRT will use this information to increase marketing efforts to promote the available training that meets the needs of industry and the community.
**Esperance-Ravensthorpe region**

The Esperance-Ravensthorpe region has an ageing population. Young people generally leave the region beyond secondary school, which was a commonly reported workforce issue. The region has a low unemployment rate of 3.1%, which is below the State average of 5.9%.

Employers and stakeholders in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region reported they were generally positive about the region’s economy. While the agriculture sector was the region’s main economic contributor, other industries such as retail, education and training, transport and logistics, and tourism also contribute to the region’s growth. While the Review did not identify skill shortages across the region’s industries, employers did express their concerns that often it was difficult to find suitably qualified candidates locally. This was particularly the case for the health care and social assistance industry which reported difficulties in attracting new staff for the expanded aged care facility in Esperance.

There were 59 occupations identified as being difficult or somewhat difficult to fill in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, and of these, nearly 41% were difficult to fill locally. These occupations were diverse and included professionals, technicians and trade workers, community and personal services workers, and labourers.

Stakeholders reported the negative perception of jobs and the lack of knowledge about the diverse range of career options in industries such as agriculture also contributed to a smaller pool of job applicants.

Anecdotal feedback from stakeholders in Esperance suggested an increasing number of people living in the Goldfields saw Esperance as both a tourist and retirement destination.

Stakeholders and employers identified training needs where qualifications were not being delivered in the region, including enrolled nursing, vehicle body builder, motor vehicle parts interpreter, and general truck driver. The increased need for skill sets for aged care training, and additional training related to the agriculture industry was also identified.

For those existing workers with qualifications, employers were very interested in using skill sets training to upskill their workforce.

During the Review, employers and other stakeholders raised the planned upgrade of the Esperance campus. The new campus will include an expanded adaptable workshop which will allow for new and additional training delivery. Planning and design works for the new Esperance campus have commenced.

SRT has indicated that feedback related to education and training gaps, and the list of occupations that are difficult to fill in the regions, will be taken into account when planning for their 2019 training delivery at Esperance campus. The college will also continue to work with industry to identify skill sets for delivery where a full qualification is not required.

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5 These were for occupations where employers could not recruit anyone from Western Australia and/or could not recruit anyone from the region, but could recruit from Perth or another region.

6 Subject to sufficient student numbers to ensure viability.
Key findings of the Esperance-Ravensthorpe labour market review

- Employers and stakeholders indicated they were generally optimistic about the future of the region’s economy.
- Employers identified 59 occupations as being difficult or somewhat difficult to fill, with 41% of those occupations being difficult to fill locally.
- Employers cited the following recruitment issues:
  - remoteness;
  - not enough people applying for vacancies;
  - wages and conditions;
  - lack of relevant skills and experience of candidates; and
  - other barriers such as relocation costs and inability to pass alcohol or drug tests.
- Other issues impacting on the region’s workforce include:
  - a low unemployment rate of 3.1% compared to the State average of 5.9%;
  - an ageing workforce which is higher than the State average;
  - young people leaving the region after secondary school;
  - the high cost of living and lack of facilities in the region;
  - the negative perception of the agriculture industry where employment is commonly perceived to be farming only; and
  - lack of knowledge of career pathways.
- Low levels of school completion rates for Aboriginal people (17.7%) compared to 25.6% of the State’s Aboriginal population.
- Employers are actively offering employment opportunities to help keep young people in the region.
- With strong growth expected in the agriculture sector, its workforce is expected to be impacted by technological advances such as automation.
- The aged care sector is growing in the region and there is a need for a larger skilled workforce which will include additional personal care workers and enrolled nurses.
- Aged care employers prefer individuals to undertake skill sets training rather than completing a full qualification due to associated high costs of training.
- For those existing workers with qualifications, employers were very interested in using skill sets training to upskill their workforce.
- Training services provided by SRT’s Esperance campus and private providers in the region were viewed favourably by employers.
- To address training gaps in the region, SRT is:
  - arranging to bring in lecturers from Albany and Bunbury campuses to support local delivery of courses in Esperance; and
  - creating opportunities for delivery of skill sets and short courses as required by industry.
3 GREAT SOUTHERN REGION

3.1 GREAT SOUTHERN REVIEW FINDINGS

During the Review, employers and other stakeholders reported they were generally positive about the region’s economy and its potential for future growth.

The main employing industries in the region were agriculture, forestry and fishing, health care and social assistance, followed by retail trade. Within the Local Government Authority (LGA) of Albany (the region’s population centre), health care and social assistance was the dominant employing industry, followed by retail trade, and education and training.

With a preference to employ locally, a common theme was the smaller pool of suitably skilled and experienced applicants available for the Great Southern workforce.

The 2016 Census data indicates the Great Southern has an ageing population, with 28.6% of residents aged between 45 and 64 years of age and 20.2% of residents aged 65 years and over. This is consistent with regions that appeal to retirees and lifestyle communities such as the Peel and Wheatbelt. This was substantiated during the Review with stakeholders consistently reporting a theme of older people moving to Albany to retire, and that individuals who could not retire full time were taking part time work or starting small businesses to supplement their income.

Stakeholders also reported young families were relocating to the region due to lifestyle choices. Feedback suggested these individuals may not necessarily be seeking full time employment opportunities, but rather looking for part time or casual jobs, or part time work often with multiple organisations. Other feedback suggested individuals preferred to work during school hours in order to meet their lifestyle needs.

A low unemployment rate of 3.3% was also considered a factor impacting on the ability of employers to find suitably skilled workers in the region.

According to the 2016 Census, almost 31% of Great Southern residents worked full-time (compared to 35.8% for the State). Almost 20% of residents worked part time (compared to 18.9% for the State) which was the second highest number of part time workers, after the South West region.

Employer and stakeholder feedback also suggested while the quality of job applicants has improved since the State’s last period of economic expansion, many of the local applicants often did not have the required skills and experience. Additionally, employers expressed their concerns regarding the attitude and job readiness of candidates.

Occupations difficult to recruit into

While the Review indicated the majority of employers had a preference to employ locally, there was a need for many of them to recruit workers from outside the region. This was reflected in the composition of the 2018 list of occupations difficult to fill in the Great

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7 Source: Department of Jobs and Small Business, Labour Market Information Portal – Small Area Labour Market data (SALM), March 2018. Note: Caution must be used when interpreting LGA level SALM data due to small population variability in the data.
Southern (see section 3.3 of this report), where just over 41% of all occupations identified were difficult to fill locally.

The 2018 list of Great Southern occupations that were considered difficult to fill had 97 occupations comprising:

- seven occupations which were highly difficult to fill\(^8\);
- 33 occupations which were difficult to fill locally\(^9\);
- 36 occupations which were somewhat difficult to fill\(^10\);
- 18 occupations currently filled, but where employers raised concerns about recruiting in the future; and
- three occupations on a watch list, where there was insufficient or conflicting evidence to confirm those occupations as being difficult to recruit into.

Of these, 27.8% were professionals, 26.8% technician and trades workers, 12.4% community and personal services workers, and 12.4% were machinery operators and drivers.

Further detail on the occupational groupings is contained in Table 1 below, including a comparison with the current 2017 *State Priority Occupation List* (SPOL).

**Table 1: Difficult to fill occupations by major occupational groups (ANZSCO)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations by major occupational grouping (ANZSCO 1 digit)</th>
<th>Occupations difficult to fill in the Great Southern</th>
<th>2017 SPOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and trade workers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and personal services workers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and administrative workers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery operators and drivers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2018

The list of occupations difficult to fill in the Great Southern contains a greater proportion of lower skilled occupations compared to the SPOL, such as machinery operators and drivers,

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\(^8\) Could not recruit anyone from Western Australia

\(^9\) Could not recruit anyone from the region, however could recruit from Perth or another region

\(^10\) Could recruit someone from the region with compromise
labourers and clerical and administrative workers. This could reflect the composition of the region’s labour market where it is dominated by a large proportion of agriculture workers, and also highlights the difficulties employers experience because of the location and low population base of the region.

Only 49 (50.5%) of these occupations are on the 2017 SPOL as a priority for the State.

The most common reasons cited by employers about why it was difficult to recruit people into certain occupations included:
- not enough people applying;
- lack of relevant skills and experience; and
- remoteness\(^{11}\).

**Table 2: Reasons for difficulty in filling occupations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough people applying</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of relevant skills and experience</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness (location)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and conditions</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other barriers to employment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues with qualifications and training</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception or status of position</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant's soft skills issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>214</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2018

The most common reasons for difficulty in filling occupations, in order of prevalence, are included below.

**Occupation type** | **Reason for difficulty**
--- | ---
Professional occupations | - remoteness (location);
 | - lack of relevant skills and experience; and
 | - not enough people applying.
Technicians and trade workers | - not enough people applying;
 | - lack of relevant skills and experience;
 | - remoteness (location); and
 | - wages and conditions.

\(^{11}\)The region’s city centre of Albany is located 415 kilometres (4.5 hours’ drive) south of Perth.
The Review also highlighted occupations which have a predominantly vocational education and training (VET) pathway and where training delivery was not available locally.

These occupations included:
- local government ranger\(^{12}\) (possible traineeship);
- truck driver (multi combination licence);
- auto body repairer;
- personal care assistant;
- security officer; and
- general farm hands.

Feedback from stakeholders indicated the State Government’s work to identify a list of occupations difficult to fill in the region can be used to inform future education and training in the region, especially if conducted on a regular basis and kept up-to-date.

Stakeholders were very forthcoming with information about workforce issues in the region and appreciated the validation meetings\(^{13}\) being held in the region rather than remotely by telephone.

**Attraction and retention of workers**

Most employers expressed a preference to employ locals, however, feedback suggested access to a pool of suitably skilled applicants was diminishing in the region. Of the employers surveyed, 59%\(^{14}\) reported they had experienced difficulties finding staff generally.

The key reasons cited by employers for not being able to fill vacancies included:
- not enough people applying for vacancies;
- local applicants often did not have the required experience or the right attitude;
- young people in particular did not have the necessary literacy, numeracy or employability (job readiness) skills; and
- a lack of relevant industry experience.

This feedback was consistent with the findings of the Commonwealth Government’s Department of Employment’s survey of Employer’s Recruitment Experiences (2016) which showed the Great Southern\(^{15}\) had approximately five applicants for each vacancy and an average of two people interviewed being suitable. This was the lowest number of job applicants compared to the rest of the State, however, the survey also identified the region as having a relatively high job vacancy fill rate of 94% (which was the third highest across all surveyed locations), and that an estimated 23% of employers surveyed cited difficulties

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\(^{12}\) Twelve students are currently undertaking training in the Aboriginal Ranger program in Esperance through South Regional TAFE (SRT). SRT is hoping to deliver this training program in Albany in the future, pending funding. SRT is currently delivering the Certificate III in Aboriginal Sites Work in Albany which provides students with access to some of the units in the Ranger program.

\(^{13}\) See Section 5 of this report for details of validation meetings held in the region.

\(^{14}\) This data is different to the ‘occupations difficult to fill’ data set reported earlier in the report.

\(^{15}\) It should be noted in 2016, the survey was conducted in the Great Southern and Wheatbelt regions and the data was captured collectively as a single category. The survey included only 267 employers for the combined regions of the Great Southern-Wheatbelt and therefore is not representative of the overall Great Southern region.
when recruiting, which related to location (45%) and the technical skills required for the job (37%).

Other workforce issues identified during the Review included:

- young people leaving the region to pursue other training and employment opportunities;
- people are moving to the region as a retirement destination, but there was a general reluctance of people to relocate for employment opportunities, often due to remoteness of some work locations (sub regional areas);
- availability of local education and training for more specialised training delivery required in the region;
- ageing workforce for industries such as agriculture, health care and social assistance, and education and training; and
- the ageing population and the impact on services and infrastructure required in the healthcare and social assistance sector.

Stakeholders advised there was considerable growth in the aged care sector due to the ageing population. This was substantiated by reports of a number of additional aged care facilities that either have or will be built in the region. This includes independent living accommodation, newly constructed and funded by the Shire of Katanning, and the Shire of Plantagenet allocating funds in its budget to facilitate construction of new aged care facilities. There are also two major aged care developments in Albany that will be undertaken by Juniper and Craigcare, with 100 additional beds planned for each facility.

There will also be a need for a larger home and community care skilled workforce to meet the demand of those aged individuals who wish to remain in their own homes. During the Review, it was suggested there may be a need for an increased pool of casual community care workers (anecdotal evidence suggesting an additional 100 skilled workers with a preference for those with a Certificate III in Individual Support) will be required in the next 12 months.
3.2 TRAINING IN THE GREAT SOUTHERN

Concern was expressed by a number of employers that young people didn’t have the education or requisite literacy and numeracy skills to be considered for vacancies.

According to the 2016 Census, the Great Southern had a lower level of year 12 completions at 40.5% compared to the State average of 51.7%. Further, only 22.5% of Aboriginal people completed year 12 (compared to 25.6% of the State’s Aboriginal population).

The Census also showed those who completed school and achieved a qualification at Certificate III or higher had a better participation rate in the workforce, highlighting the importance of education and training.

**Figure 1: Great Southern educational attainment and participation rate (2016)**

Source: ABS, Census 2016
After remaining relatively steady between 2011 and 2014, in 2017 there was an 18% decline in VET enrolments from 2016.

**Figure 2: Great Southern and VET enrolment trends, 2011–2017**

This recent downward trend in total enrolments was similar to the pattern of decline across the State. The decrease in total enrolments appears to be related to a decline in the number of enrolments for institutional based training delivery rather than training related to apprenticeships and traineeships.

SRT suggested that in addition to increases in VET fees, periods of higher employment (where individuals choose jobs over training), and the increased demand for ‘just in time’ short courses, contributed to this downward trend.

SRT also advised there had been a significant shift in the type of training being delivered in the region, with a substantial increase in the delivery of short courses. While course enrolments for publicly funded training are declining, the number of students generally has increased due to the shift in training to more ‘just in time’ short courses.

As at 31 December 2017, there were 806 apprentices and trainees working in the Great Southern region, of which 608 were in Albany.

Since 2011, the number of apprentice commencements in the Great Southern has remained fairly consistent. Trainee commencements, by comparison, increased during the 2011–13 period, then experienced a significant decline, with numbers increasing again in 2017.

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16 Publicly funded training for both public and private training providers

17 such as those related to work permits and licencing requirements
SRT confirmed that while apprenticeship numbers are lower than during the State’s previous period of economic expansion (which was due to increased investment in the mining sector), commencements have been relatively stable.

With regard to traineeships, SRT reported the decline in numbers was more than likely due to the increase in training fees, particularly in cases where students are required to pay for their own fees.

The top three apprenticeship commencements in 2017 were:
- Certificate III in Engineering - Mechanical Trade;
- Certificate III in Carpentry and Joinery; and
- Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician.

The top three traineeship commencements in 2017 were:
- Certificate III in Individual Support;
- Certificate II in Meat Processing (Abattoirs); and
- Certificate II in Horticulture.

Based on 2017 enrolments, almost 54% of publicly funded training delivery for students living in the Great Southern region was at Certificate III level or higher, with the most popular fields of study\(^{18}\) being:
- agriculture;
- social assistance services;
- professional, scientific and technical services (except computer system design and related services);
- administrative services;
- construction services; and
- preschool and school education.

\(^{18}\) According to ANZSIC WA sub-division
Throughout the Review, employers indicated training played an important part in developing and retaining their workforce. It was noted almost 90% of employers provided in-house training for their staff, specifically around enterprise and industry-specific training.

Many employers also reported they had accessed their local TAFE (SRT) and private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) for their staff training. Feedback during the Review about the services provided by both SRT and private RTOs was generally positive.

SRT is committed to providing relevant training and skill development opportunities to industry and the community in the Great Southern region. A cursory review of SRT’s planned training delivery for 2018 identified it is in line with the region’s main employing industries of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and health care and social assistance.

According to SRT’s delivery targets, the top five areas of training delivery in the Great Southern in 2018 were for qualifications related to:

- health and welfare support workers;
- personal carers and assistants;
- stationary plant operators;
- natural and physical science professionals; and
- farm, forestry and garden workers.

Feedback from employers also highlighted the need for more flexible delivery options to assist full time workers to access courses relevant to enterprises (e.g. conflict management, project management and leadership courses) and more short courses related to work permits/licences (e.g. working at heights, forklift, occupational health and safety).

Industry acknowledged with the demand for home and community care services increasing over the coming years (particularly with the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme), additional training delivery in Certificate III in Individual Support was likely to be required. With an ageing population in the region, there will also be an increased demand for aged care training.

While the Albany, Denmark, Katanning and Mt Barker campuses of SRT offer a range of training courses from foundation skills courses, Certificate I to Advanced Diploma in a variety of industry areas, as well as short, flexible and online course options, it was acknowledged by SRT that they do not have access to the lecturers and/or equipment and technology to deliver some of the more specialised and higher level courses. Further, there was not the number of students to make the running of certain courses viable (often referred to as ‘thin markets’).

Those courses highlighted during the Review as highly desirable but not being delivered locally included qualifications related to local government ranger services, truck driving (multi combination), auto body repair, and security services.

SRT reported that a considerable amount of resources are dedicated to the delivery of skill sets or non-accredited short courses (such as first aid, forklift and traffic management) in

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19 According to the number of student contact hours
20 This includes training in conservation and land management (including indigenous land management and Aboriginal site work) and horticulture.
the region. For the first half of 2018, 220 short courses were delivered by SRT. Considerable effort has been made to market these products locally with advertisements in local papers, distribution of promotional flyers, and regular mail outs to around 2,500 local businesses regarding the diverse range of courses offered by the TAFE College.

Another common issue raised by stakeholders and employers during the Review was the high cost of training. The State Government froze TAFE fees after being elected which was viewed positively, however, stakeholders suggested the cost was still acting as a barrier to training.

The cost of training was considered a significant barrier for those individuals from under-represented groups who often need to enter the training system through entry level courses and progress to higher level qualifications.

A further concern raised by a number of stakeholders was that young people and careers advisors in schools were not aware of the diverse range of careers, training and employment opportunities available within industries across the region. It is envisaged strategies such as the Denmark Employment, Education and Training Expo held in August 2018 and facilitated by the Denmark Chamber of Commerce will assist to address these concerns. The objective of the one-day forum held at the Shire of Denmark offices was to provide young people with an opportunity to connect with local businesses and also focused on disseminating information on career pathways and future employment opportunities.

SRT has advised they will take the feedback about training into account when planning for their 2019 training delivery. Where perceived training gaps have been identified by stakeholders during the Review, SRT will use this information to increase marketing efforts to promote the available training that meets the needs of industry and the community.
### 3.3 2018 LIST OF OCCUPATIONS DIFFICULT TO FILL IN THE GREAT SOUTHERN

Based on the findings of the Review, a list of those occupations that were considered difficult to fill in the region is included below.

#### Highly difficult to fill
(Could not recruit anyone from Western Australia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSCO</th>
<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>121411</td>
<td>Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254422</td>
<td>Registered Nurse (Mental Health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324111</td>
<td>Panelbeater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342315</td>
<td>Electronic Instrument Trades Worker (Special Class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599915</td>
<td>Clinical Coder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>721111</td>
<td>Agricultural and Horticultural Mobile Plant Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841611</td>
<td>Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Difficult to fill locally
(Could not recruit anyone from the region, however could recruit from Perth or another region)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSCO</th>
<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111111</td>
<td>Chief Executive or Managing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132211</td>
<td>Finance Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133112</td>
<td>Project Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133512</td>
<td>Production Manager (Manufacturing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149113</td>
<td>Sports Centre Manager [Swimming Pool Manager]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224512</td>
<td>Valuer [Land or Commercial Property Valuer]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232212</td>
<td>Surveyor [Building Surveyor]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232611</td>
<td>Urban and Regional Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233211</td>
<td>Civil Engineer</td>
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<td>233512</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineer</td>
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<td>233513</td>
<td>Production or Plant Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234113</td>
<td>Forester</td>
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<tr>
<td>242211</td>
<td>Vocational Education Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252311</td>
<td>Environmental Health Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252411</td>
<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252511</td>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253111</td>
<td>General Medical Practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253311</td>
<td>Specialist Physician (General Medicine)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
253411 Psychiatrist
253913 Obstetrician and Gynaecologist
254412 Registered Nurse (Aged Care)
271311 Solicitor
312412 Electronic Engineering Technician
313112 ICT Customer Support Officer
321111 Automotive Electrician
321212 Diesel Motor Mechanic
322311 Metal Fabricators
323211 Fitter (General)
323214 Metal Machinist (First Class)
511112 Program and Project Administrator [Works Manager]
711312 Wood Processing Machine Operator
712912 Grain Handler
741111 Warehouse Storeperson

Somewhat difficult to fill
(Could recruit someone from the region with compromise)

ANZSCO ANZSCO Description

222113 Insurance Broker
223112 Recruitment Consultant
231211 Master Fisher [Boat Skipper]
242112 University Tutor
251411 Optometrist
311111 Agricultural Technician
322313 Welder (First Class)
341111 Electrician (General)
341112 Electrician (Special Class)
351111 Baker
351211 Butcher
351311 Chef
351411 Cook
361211 Shearer
411511 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker
411711 Community Worker
411712 Disabilities Services Officer
411716 Youth Worker
423111 Aged or Disabled Carer
423312 Nursing Support Worker
423313 Personal Care Assistant
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Security Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>452315</td>
<td>Swimming Coach or Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>551112</td>
<td>Cost Clerk [Finance Admin]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599599</td>
<td>Inspector and Regulatory Officers Nec. [Council Ranger]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>721211</td>
<td>Earthmoving plant Operator (General)</td>
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<td>721212</td>
<td>Backhoe Operator</td>
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<td>721215</td>
<td>Grader Operator</td>
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<tr>
<td>721216</td>
<td>Loader Operator</td>
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<tr>
<td>721311</td>
<td>Forklift Driver</td>
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<td>733111</td>
<td>Truck Driver (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>821111</td>
<td>Builder's Labourer</td>
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<tr>
<td>841212</td>
<td>Fruit or Nut Picker</td>
</tr>
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<td>841215</td>
<td>Vegetable Picker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841216</td>
<td>Vineyard Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>899415</td>
<td>Tyre Fitter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Currently filled – Future concerns**

(Occupations which are currently filled, but where employers raised concerns about recruiting into the future)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSCO</th>
<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111211</td>
<td>Corporate General Manager [General Manager – Marine]</td>
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<tr>
<td>221111</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221112</td>
<td>Management Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223311</td>
<td>Training and Development Professional [Training Manager]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254111</td>
<td>Midwife [Aboriginal Midwife]</td>
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<tr>
<td>323315</td>
<td>Saw Doctor [Saw Maker]</td>
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<tr>
<td>342311</td>
<td>Business Machine Mechanic [Photocopier Technician]</td>
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<tr>
<td>362213</td>
<td>Landscape Gardener</td>
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<tr>
<td>362411</td>
<td>Nurseryperson (Pollinator)</td>
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<td>Upholsterer</td>
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<td>394213</td>
<td>Wood Machinist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411411</td>
<td>Enrolled Nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>422116</td>
<td>Teacher's Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>711914</td>
<td>Sterilisation Technician</td>
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<tr>
<td>442212</td>
<td>Armoured Car Escort</td>
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<tr>
<td>731211</td>
<td>Bus Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>831211</td>
<td>Meat Boner and Slicer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>851311</td>
<td>Kitchenhand</td>
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</table>
**Watch list**
(Further evidence required)

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<th>ANZSCO</th>
<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>321211</td>
<td>Motor Mechanic (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331212</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599411</td>
<td>Human Resources Clerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 GREAT SOUTHERN ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET - A SNAPSHOT

This snapshot should be read in conjunction with the 2018 Great Southern Labour Market Profile\(^{21}\).

Economy

The Great Southern region is the second largest agricultural producer in Western Australia, contributing over $1 billion to the region’s gross regional product (GRP)\(^ {22}\). Generally, the region’s agriculture industry has performed consistently over the last few years with some variability year to year due to seasonal conditions and world markets.

The GRP for the Great Southern region was estimated at $4.8 billion in 2014–15\(^ {23}\). Primary production (agriculture, forestry and fishing) is the largest industry sector by value of production and the biggest employer (3,873 people\(^ {24}\)) in the Great Southern region.

The main primary industry sectors include grain and livestock, plantation blue gum timber, woodchip processing for export, fishing, aquaculture, viticulture and horticulture. The region’s primary industries also drive the manufacturing and fabrication sectors and provide value-adding opportunities through processing.

Although mining is a small contributor to the region’s economy, there are two major resource projects in the region currently under consideration. These include a magnetite mining project near Wellstead and a gold mining project near Katanning, however, stakeholder feedback during the Review indicated that growth in this sector is not likely to occur in the near future.

Over the last five years to 2016–17, the total number of residential dwelling approvals has remained fairly consistent, with the exception of a peak in 2014–15 (495 approvals). In 2016–17, there were 404 dwelling approvals granted in the Great Southern region\(^ {25}\) compared to 371 approvals in 2012–2013. Most of this building activity was centred in the City of Albany. During the Review stakeholder feedback confirmed the domestic construction market in the region had been steady in recent years.

The total value of non-residential building approvals increased from $54.4 million in 2013–14 to $77.6 million in 2016–17. This represents a significant increase of 42.6% over the three-year period for the Great Southern region.

The strong growth in the value of non-residential approvals in the Great Southern coincides with the development of a number of large civil construction projects in the region. Significant government funded projects in the Great Southern include the construction of Stage one and two of the Affordable Student Accommodation facilities adjacent to the UWA Albany Centre and the recently completed upgrade to Katanning Hospital.

\(^{21}\) Link of website to be included
\(^{22}\) Department of Regional Development, Great Southern – a region in profile
\(^{23}\) Committee for Economic Development of Australia’s State of the Regions Series 2016
\(^{24}\) ABS Census 2016
\(^{25}\) ABS, 8731.0 - Building Approvals, Australia – December figures
As part of the first stage of the student accommodation project, the housing facility welcomed its first intake of student residents in February 2018. Stage two will see additional accommodation being built which is expected to be completed by May 2020.

Current major projects include Albany Wave Energy which commenced in 2018, and will produce reliable clean energy for the regional electricity grid. It is expected the project will be completed by 2019. Also commencing in 2018 was the South Coast Highway upgrade between Albany and Jerramungup. The $30 million road works are scheduled to be undertaken over three years.

The retail sector will continue to contribute to the region’s economic base and this was supported by stakeholder feedback during the Review, however, there was also feedback which suggested there were some individual retailers that were struggling in the region.

The Great Southern region has seen greater investment in its tourism industry recently including the opening of the new City of Albany Tourism and Information Hub in April 2018. Marketing campaigns such as the *Discover Denmark* and the *Amazing South Coast*, which was launched in early 2018, also aim to draw a greater number of visitors to the region. Additionally, as part of its *Plan for Albany*, the State Government has committed to working with the City of Albany, and will contribute funding towards the development of an artificial surfing reef located at Middleton Beach. There was also a commitment of $6 million of State Government funding towards the development of a world class Motorsports complex in Albany.

### Population

According to the 2016 ABS Census data, the Great Southern region had a residential population of 59,159 people with the following age distribution.

- 65 years and above: 20.2%
- 45–64 years: 28.6%
- 25–44 years: 21.9%
- 15–24 years: 10.5%
- 0–14 years: 18.8%

When compared to the State overall, the Great Southern region had a relatively older population, particularly for those aged 65 years and older. The impact of an ageing population on services, infrastructure and the workforce in the region was raised as an issue by many stakeholders during the Review.

The 2016 Census data showed the resident population of the Great Southern has increased by 3,799 people since the 2011 Census period. This represents a 6.5% increase with the region having the third largest increase within regional Western Australia (behind the Peel (21%) and the South West (7%)). For the City of Albany, the number of residents increased by 2,921 people. The City of Albany advised they were actively seeking population growth with a focus on economic development.

The greatest population increase was among those aged 65 years or older, with an increase of 2,782 people (comprising 1,376 females and 1,406 males). This represents a 30% increase since 2011 with the Great Southern having the third largest increase for the
cohort of people aged 65 years or older (behind the South West and Peel regions which experienced a 38.9% and 31.9% increase respectively).

The second largest growth cohort was among the 45 to 64 year olds, with an increase of 1,248 people (702 females and 546 males). Again, the Great Southern experienced the third highest increase of 8%, behind the Peel and South West (16.6% and 12% respectively).

Overall, the region’s age profile was consistent with regions such as the Peel and Wheatbelt that are seen as attractive retirement and lifestyle communities.

While the region experienced an overall population increase, declines were experienced in some cohorts. Between 2011 and 2016, there was a decline of 356 people aged 0–14 years. The number of females aged 25–44 years declined by 94 people, compared to the number of males in the same age cohort, which increased by 165 people.

In the Great Southern, 3.6% of the population identified as being Aboriginal, which was slightly greater than the State average of 3.1%. The actual Aboriginal population in the region was likely to be higher than stated, especially in the more remote LGAs, due to issues associated with under reporting by the Aboriginal population.

The 2016 Census showed 20.1% (10,835 persons) of Great Southern residents were born outside of Australia, which was similar to 2011 figures and lower than overall State figures. The LGAs such as Denmark (25%), Katanning (22.9%), Plantagenet (20.9%) and Albany (20.3%) had the highest proportion of overseas born residents.

Employment

Census figures show that between 2011 and 2016 the number of employed residents in the Great Southern increased from 24,843 to 25,858 persons, representing an increase of 4.1%.26

The main employing industries across the Great Southern region were agriculture, forestry and fishing (3,873 workers), health care and social assistance (2,940 workers) followed by retail trade (2,643 workers). Within the LGA of Albany (the region’s population centre), healthcare and social assistance (2,099 workers) was the dominant employing industry, followed by retail trade (1,927 workers) and education and training (1,598 workers).

Figure 4 illustrates that between 2011 and 2016 the largest growth in the number of people employed occurred in the industries of education and training (283 people), and the health care and social assistance (279 people). Other services (168), and accommodation and food services (144) also experienced growth over this period.

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26 ABS Census 2011 and 2016
According to the 2016 Census, the top ten occupation categories (6 digit ANZSCO) in the Great Southern were:

621111 Sales Assistant (General) (1,218 workers)
121411 Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmer (951 workers)
423111 Aged or Disabled Carer (519 workers)
142111 Retail Manager (General) (485 workers)
531111 General Clerk (441 workers)
733111 Truck Driver (General) (434 workers)
241213 Primary School Teacher (425 workers)
811211 Commercial Cleaner (422 workers)
241411 Secondary School Teacher (364 workers)
121312 Beef Cattle Farmer (327 workers)

27 According to the number of workers
The increased growth in the healthcare and social assistance area was substantiated by stakeholder feedback during the Review. With the region’s ageing population, feedback suggested this industry will continue to experience significant growth, as the demand for aged care facilities and services increase.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is due to commence from 1 July 2019 in the region, and despite reported projections of the need for almost triple the number of disability support workers in the Great Southern, stakeholders advised the workforce implications of the NDIS roll-out currently remain unclear for the region. There also appeared to be no heightened level of concern by stakeholders.

Between the period 2011 and 2016, the industries which experienced decreases in employment included manufacturing (323) and retail trade (206).

While experiencing a decrease in employment numbers, retail trade remains the third largest employer in the Great Southern region. During the Review, employer and stakeholder feedback about the retail industry was mixed, with some advising the sector was struggling due to low customer confidence, changing spending habits, and the impact of online retailing.

However, other anecdotal feedback suggested in larger regional areas, some retailers were experiencing positive growth. This was particularly evident for those retail businesses that were able to leverage new technology, take into account the changing profile of their customers, apply new business models, and for some, diversify their retail activities.

It is acknowledged that retailers in sub-regional areas continue to struggle due to smaller populations, and are impacted by the existing challenges of the retail trade industry such as rising operational and staffing costs, and increases in commercial rental prices.

For most of the other industries, employment numbers remained relatively stable. Agriculture, forestry and fishing continued to be the largest employer in the region, showing a marginal increase of 49 workers.

During the Review, stakeholders confirmed that due to high commodity prices, the agriculture industry has been experiencing growth, in the livestock, grain and wool sectors. While Forestry has been steady, woodchip manufacturing has experienced positive growth, mainly due to overseas demand for exports.

At the time of the 2016 Census there were 24,016 people employed in the Great Southern, of which 643 people (2.7%) resided outside the region. Compared to the other regions, Great Southern has the lowest proportion of jobs that are filled by people living outside of the region, followed by the South West at 3.1%.

Figure 5 identifies the number of people who work in each of the region’s LGAs and whether they reside within or outside the Great Southern region. Albany (226) had the largest number of jobs filled by people who live outside the region, which represents 1.5%.
of jobs located specifically in Albany. This was substantiated during the Review with stakeholders reporting there was little fly-in fly-out activity in the region.

There are also Great Southern residents who work outside of the region in Stirling (32 people), Manjimup (27 people), Wagin (20 people), Dumbleyung (16 people) and Mandurah (15 people).

During the interviews it was also stated there are some health specialists who fly-in fly-out on a regular basis.

**Figure 5: Great Southern region: Workforce – By place of residence, 2016**

Over the past 10 years to 2016–17, there have been only slight fluctuations in the number of temporary primary 457 visas granted each year. These have mainly been in the

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29 Department of Immigration and Boarder Protection, Subclass 457 Visa Grants Quarterly, September 2017
agriculture, forestry and fishing, health care and social assistance, and the accommodation and food services industries.

The minimal use of temporary primary 457 visas in the region was evident during the Review. Only 14% of employers interviewed reported they had employees who had been recruited through this visa program.

As in other regional areas of the State, backpackers are often the key source of labour for industries such as accommodation and food services, and agriculture in the Great Southern. While most employers interviewed indicated a preference for local workers, the agriculture industry reported backpackers were an important component of their workforce. Employers in the agriculture sector stated one option for sourcing backpackers was through the use of a company in Northam which specialises in providing backpackers with relevant training and skills.

The reliance on backpackers in the region, particularly in the agriculture sector was substantiated through the Review with occupations such as grain handler, fruit or nut picker, vegetable picker and vineyard worker appearing on the 2018 list of occupations difficult to fill in the Great Southern (see Section 3.3 of this report).

When examining the age distribution of those employed in the Great Southern, 11,404 people, or 44.2% of the workforce, was aged 45 to 64 years. This was higher than the State average of 36.5%.

Of the 11,404 people in this cohort, 14.5% (1,653 people) were employed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry, down from 16% (1,713 persons) in 2011. The health care and social assistance (13.4% or 1,518 people), and education and training (11.8% or 1,354 people) industries also provided a reasonable amount of employment for the 45–64 year old cohort.

People aged 25–44 years represented 35.1% (9,063 people) of the Great Southern workforce, compared to 45.2% of the State’s overall workforce.

According to the Census 2016, there were 1,536 residents aged between 15–19 years and 1,789 residents aged 20–24 years who were employed in the region. The retail trade industry was the main employing industry for both youth cohorts. Aboriginal people represented 3.6% of the total population in the Great Southern region. Of these, there are a number of young Aboriginal people moving into the working age range. The 2016 Census indicated approximately 50.7% of the region’s reported Aboriginal population was 24 years old or younger, compared with 28.7% of the non-Aboriginal population.

The education and training industry is the fourth largest employer in the Great Southern, and the largest employer of Aboriginal people. In 2016, this industry provided employment to 60 Aboriginal people, up from 44 in 2011, however, this only represents 2.5% of the 2,446 people employed in this industry. The industry areas of public administration and safety (59 persons), construction (45 persons), and health care and social assistance (44 persons) also featured prominently as employers of Aboriginal people.

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30 After Peel and South West, the Great Southern has the smallest proportion of Aboriginal residents in regional Western Australia
Between 2011 and 2016, growth in relation to the number of Aboriginal people employed was experienced in the mining (up 18 people), accommodation and food services (up 17 people), construction (up 17) and the education and training (up 16 people) industries. The public administration and safety industry, the second largest employer of Aboriginal people, experienced a decline of nine people during this same period.

The most recently available Small Area Labour Market (SALM) data indicated the unemployment rate for the Great Southern increased from 4.1% to 4.3% over a 12-month period to December 2017 (below the State average of 5.9%). In Albany, the unemployment rate decreased from 6.5% in December 2016 to 4.2% in December 2017.

According to the 2016 ABS Census the unemployment rate of Aboriginal people in the Great Southern was 19.1%, down from 23.2% in 2011. At a State level, the unemployment rate of Aboriginal people increased to 22.2% in 2016, up from 17.8% in 2011. The number of Aboriginal people employed in the Great Southern increased from 402 in 2011 to 488 in 2016.

31 Caution should be used when examining LGA level Small Area Labour Market (SALM) data due to small population variability in the data.
4 ESPERANCE-RAVENSTHORPE REGION

4.1 ESPERANCE-RAVENSTHORPE - REVIEW FINDINGS

Employers and stakeholders in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region reported they were generally positive about the region’s economy.

A consistent theme expressed by Esperance stakeholders was Esperance is considered a destination of choice for those living in the Goldfields. This was both for tourism and for those seeking to move permanently for lifestyle reasons, as Esperance was seen as a retirement destination. Stakeholders also reported people who grew up in Esperance often return to continue working and raise their families.

During the Review, employers expressed a preference to employ locally. Many young people choose to leave Esperance to further their education, however, several stakeholders reported employers actively seek to provide job opportunities such as apprenticeships and traineeships to young people when they leave school to encourage them to stay in the region.

An ageing population and young people leaving the region beyond secondary school were commonly identified as general trends during the Review. Feedback also suggested the number of applicants for jobs advertised in the region were adequate (around 20). In the agricultural industry seasonal jobs were generally filled by backpackers because they were available, reliable, willing to do the work and live in more remote areas of the region.

The reliance on backpackers in the region, particularly in the agriculture sector was substantiated through the Review with occupations such as mixed crop and livestock farm workers, and sheep farm workers appearing on the 2018 list of occupations difficult to fill in the Esperance/Ravensthorpe region (see Section 4.3 of this report).

With an ageing population, workforce issues for the health care and social assistance industry were often raised during the Review. As an example, the aged care facility in Esperance reported current difficulties in attracting new staff to service the aged care facilities with 30 new beds set to become available in October 2018.

While skill shortages across the region’s industries were not identified during the Review, some employers reported finding suitably qualified, motivated job seekers a challenge. Many stakeholders advised local applicants often did not have the required experience and skills, numeracy and literacy capabilities, attitude and job readiness. Stakeholders reported in some cases employment conditions (for example, part time only work offered by employer) may have also been a factor in recruiting suitable staff, since other employers did not report the same recruitment difficulties.

During the Review there was much discussion about the March 2018 Cleveland-Cliffs announcement that it would end mining in Koolyanobbing and make its last shipment of iron ore in June 2018. The impact of this closure on the Cleveland-Cliffs workers and for the ‘flow on’ services connected to the mine such as the Esperance Port and rail haulage

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32 It was reported last financial year, iron ore from this mine made up about 75% of export tonnes through the Esperance Port.
operators was a concern raised by employers and stakeholders. A key concern related to the rail haulage operators living in Esperance who faced losing their jobs, and faced leaving Esperance to seek other employment.

On 13 June 2018, it was announced Mineral Resources Ltd had acquired Cleveland-Cliffs’ Koolyanobbing iron ore operation. At the time of this announcement, it was reported this acquisition would ensure mining operations would continue in the region, and exports would continue to be shipped through Esperance Port, providing future certainty for the local workforce.

Occupations difficult to recruit into
While the Review indicated the majority of employers had a preference to employ locals, many employers reported there was a need to recruit workers from outside the region in order to fill their job vacancies. This was reflected in the composition of the 2017 Esperance-Ravensthorpe list of occupations difficult to fill (see Section 4.3 of this report), where nearly 41% of all occupations identified were difficult to fill locally.

The 2018 list of Esperance-Ravensthorpe occupations that were considered difficult to fill had 59 occupations, comprising:
- three occupations which were highly difficult to fill;\(^{33}\)
- 23 occupations which were difficult to fill locally;\(^{34}\)
- 26 occupations which were somewhat difficult to fill;\(^{35}\)
- four occupations which were currently filled, but where employers raised concerns about recruiting into the future; and
- three occupations on a watch list where there was insufficient or conflicting evidence to confirm those occupations as difficult to recruit into.

Of these, 22% were professionals, 20.3% technician and trades workers, 15.3% labourers, and 11.9% community and personal services workers.

Further details on the occupational groupings are contained in Table 3, including a comparison with the current SPOL.

\(^{33}\) Could not recruit anyone from Western Australia
\(^{34}\) Could not recruit anyone from the region, however could recruit from Perth or another region
\(^{35}\) Difficult to fill locally but could recruit someone from the region with compromise
Table 3: Difficult to fill occupations by major occupational groups (ANZSCO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations by major occupational grouping (ANZSCO 1 digit)</th>
<th>Occupations difficult to fill in Esperance-Ravensthorpe</th>
<th>2017 SPOL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and trade workers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and personal services workers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clerical and administrative workers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery operators and drivers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2018

The list of occupations difficult to fill in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region contains a greater proportion of lower skilled occupations compared to the SPOL, including labourers, sales workers, machinery operators and drivers, and administrative workers. This could reflect the composition of the region’s labour market where the main employing industries were agriculture and retail, and also the difficulties employers experienced due to the remoteness and low population base of the region.

It should also be noted only 30 of the occupations on the 2018 Esperance-Ravensthorpe occupation list (or 50.9%) are on the 2017 SPOL as a priority for the State.

The most common reasons cited by employers about why it was difficult to recruit people into certain occupations included:

- remoteness (location);
- not enough people applying;
- wages and conditions;
- lack of relevant skills and experience; and
- other barriers.

36 Esperance is located approximately 720 kilometres (7.5 hours drive) east-southeast of Perth
Table 4: Reasons for difficulty in filling occupations in Esperance-Ravensthorpe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness (location)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough people applying</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and conditions</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of relevant skills and experience</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other barriers to employment</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues with qualifications and training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception or status of position</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s soft skills issues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common reasons cited by employers about why it was difficult to recruit, in order of prevalence, include:

**Occupation type**                                      **Reason for difficulty**

Professional occupations

- remoteness (location)
- not enough people applying
- issues associated with the attraction of qualified people due to employment conditions (such as part time only employment being offered by employer)

Technicians and trade workers

- not enough people applying
- lack of relevant skills and experience
- remoteness (location)
- wages and conditions
- other barriers to employment (such as the cost of relocation and applicant’s work attitude)

The situation for sales workers was somewhat different as unskilled workers can often be trained in-house and positions can be filled with compromise. The reasons cited by employers for not being able to fill these positions included a poor work ethic and a lack of willingness to work on rostered days.

The Review also highlighted occupations which have a predominantly vocational education and training (VET) pathway and where training delivery was not available locally. These occupations included:

- personal care workers;
- enrolled nurses;
- vehicle body builder; and
- motor vehicle parts interpreter.
Feedback from stakeholders indicated the State Government’s work to identify a list of occupations difficult to fill in the region can be used to inform future education and training in the region, especially if conducted on a regular basis and kept up-to-date.

Attraction and retention of workers
Throughout the Review, most employers in the region expressed a preference to employ locals, however, feedback suggested access to a pool of suitably skilled applicants was diminishing in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region. Of the employers surveyed, 66%\(^\text{37}\) reported they experienced difficulties in finding staff.

During the Review, employer and stakeholder feedback cited the following reasons as key barriers in filling vacancies generally:
- local applicants often did not have the required work experience or the right attitude;
- young people in particular did not have the necessary literacy, numeracy or employability (job readiness) skills;
- lack of specific industry experience (such as mechanical experience for agriculture machinery); and
- the reluctance of people to move to the region for employment, often due to remoteness of some work locations.

This feedback was consistent with the findings of the Australian Government’s Department of Employment’s survey of Employer’s Recruitment Experiences (2016) which showed Esperance as having the second lowest job vacancy fill rate of 86%, which was higher than Broome at 84% but marginally lower than Kalgoorlie at 87%. The survey also showed the most significant difficulties experienced by employers related to technical skills required for the job (50% of respondents) and location (38% of respondents).

Other workforce issues identified during the stakeholder interviews included:
- young people leaving the region to pursue other training and employment opportunities;
- the high cost of living in the region and the lack of facilities;
- availability of local education and training for the more specialised higher skilled technical and professional roles;
- the negative perception of particular industries and the lack of knowledge regarding the range of career options and pathways available. For example, feedback suggested agriculture employment was commonly perceived as work that is related to farming only, despite other career pathways being available within the sector; and
- inability of job applicants to pass drug and alcohol tests.

Stakeholders also reported concerns about the difficulty in recruiting appropriately trained staff for aged care roles. The Review highlighted the aged care sector was growing in the region and the increased need for appropriate facilities has resulted in the expansion of the Esperance Aged Care Facility, which has recently added an additional 34 new beds.

During the Review, it was reported an additional 30–40 personal care workers and 4–5 enrolled nurses will be needed within this organisation. It was expected the nurses will have to be recruited from outside the region, however, it was also expected there may be challenges associated with this, as few nurses have a preference for working in aged care.

\(^{37}\) This data is different to the ‘occupations difficult to fill’ data set reported earlier in the report.
facilities, and the region’s remote location may also act as a barrier to attracting skilled workers.

Stakeholder feedback suggested the personal care workers required in the industry may be recruited from within Esperance with some compromise. However, employers and other stakeholders throughout the Review reinforced how critical it was to have the required courses delivered in the region to ensure local residents have access to this training.
4.2 TRAINING IN THE ESPERANCE-RAVENSTHORPE REGION

A number of employers expressed concerns that young local people don’t always have the educational standards or requisite literacy and numeracy skills to be considered competitive for vacancies in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region.

According to the 2016 Census, Esperance-Ravensthorpe had a significantly lower level of year 12 completions at 36.6% compared to the State average of 51.7%. Only 17.7% of the Aboriginal population in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region had completed year 12, compared to 25.6% of the State’s Aboriginal population.

The Census also showed those who did complete school and achieve a qualification at Certificate III or higher had a much better participation rate in the workforce, highlighting the importance of education and training.

Figure 6 illustrates this relationship for the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, and suggests the higher the educational attainment, the lower the unemployment rate. It also illustrates the unemployment rates shown for each qualification level are substantially lower than the Western Australia average.

Figure 6: Esperance-Ravensthorpe educational attainment and labour force participation rate (2016)

Source: ABS, Census 2016
Figure 7: Esperance-Ravensthorpe region: VET enrolment trends 2011–2017

Figure 7 shows a general decline of total enrolments in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region since 2016. This recent downward trend in total enrolments within the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region was similar to the pattern of decline across the State.

SRT suggested that the downward trend in enrolments may be due to increases in VET fees, periods of higher employment (where individuals choose jobs over training), and the increased demand for ‘just in time’ short courses such as those related to work permits and licensing requirements, rather than completing full qualifications.

Figure 8 provides information regarding the number of apprentice and trainee commencements in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region from 2011 to the 2017.

Figure 8: Esperance-Ravensthorpe apprentice and trainee commencements, 2011–2017

Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, Enrolment Statistics, 2018

Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, Training Records System, 2018
At 31 December 2017, there were 198 apprentices and trainees working in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, of which 191 were in Esperance.

The top three apprenticeships commencements in 2017 were:
- Certificate III in Engineering – Mechanical Trade;
- Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician; and

The top traineeships commencements in 2017 were:
- Certificate III in Retail;
- Certificate III in Business; and
- Certificate III in Travel.

Based on 2017 enrolments, 68.4% of publicly funded training delivery for students living in Esperance-Ravensthorpe was at Certificate III level or higher, with the most popular fields of study being:
- agriculture;
- social assistance services;
- administrative services;
- professional, scientific and technical services (except computer system design and related services); and
- repair and maintenance.

During the Review, employers deemed training an important component in developing and retaining their workforce. It was noted 80% of employers provided in-house training for their staff, specifically around company and industry-specific training.

Many employers also reported they accessed their local TAFE (SRT) and private RTOs to provide training for their staff. Feedback from employers was generally positive regarding the services provided by both SRT and private RTOs.

While the Esperance campus of SRT offers a range of training courses from Certificate II to Diploma in a number of industry areas, as well as short, flexible and online course options, it was acknowledged by SRT that they do not have access to the lecturers and/or equipment and technology to deliver some of the more specialised and higher level courses.

Those courses highlighted during the Review as highly desirable but not being delivered locally included qualifications related to enrolled nursing, vehicle body builder, motor vehicle parts interpreter, and truck driver (general).

Employers also reported there was a need for more agricultural focused training, short courses related to customer service, and additional literacy and numeracy training across all sectors.

As highlighted earlier in the report, the increased demand for aged care services will require a larger, suitably skilled workforce. There was a preference by employers for individuals to undertake skills set training rather than completing a full qualification. This was due to the
high costs associated with completing a full qualification, which often many individuals cannot afford due to the low paying remuneration for these occupations. SRT is currently working with an aged care provider to develop and deliver skill sets in personal care/home care assistance. For those existing workers with qualifications, employers were very interested in using skill sets training to upskill their workforce.

As part of the Review, DTWD visited Esperance to validate the findings gathered during the employer and stakeholder interviews and was joined by the Esperance Campus Manager.

SRT has advised as a result of the Review they will be creating more opportunities for the delivery of short courses and skill sets that are required by industry, including in areas such as aged care, agriculture and customer service.

To meet the training needs of the region, SRT advised they have arranged to bring in lecturers from Albany and Bunbury to support training being delivered locally in Esperance. SRT has recently recruited a new agriculture lecturer who is also undertaking accreditation to deliver the chemical handling course locally in Esperance.

Another key issue raised by employers related to the timing of block release training for apprentices, with employers expressing their desire to have greater flexibility to align with business cycles.

The busiest times for the agriculture industry are at seeding and harvesting. This currently coincides with the 2–3 weeks of block release apprentice training which requires them to be off the worksite. Employers suggested it would be beneficial for both employers and apprentices if this block training was conducted in April, or between October and December, when the industry may not be at its busiest.

Other employers reported that with more than one apprentice in their workplace, rigid block training made it difficult to release all apprentices at the same time, especially during critical business periods.

During the Review, employers and other stakeholders raised the planned upgrade of the Esperance campus.

In 2017, the State Government approved funding of $17.85 million for the Esperance campus. The new campus will include an expanded adaptable workshop which will allow for new and additional training delivery subject to sufficient student numbers to ensure viability.

The potential areas of training delivery include heavy and light automotive; engineering, building and construction; carpentry and joinery; automotive electrical; automotive air conditioning; electrical and instrumentation; mining and resources; and occupational health and safety. Many of these industry areas are aligned to occupations that were identified as difficult to fill in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region.

The new campus will allow SRT to develop new work readiness programs for the resources sector which will target youth and those who are unemployed with tailored programs to engage local Aboriginal people.
The new campus will also include a simulated training ward for aged care and nursing students to support the growing aged care sector, a simulated salon for hairdressing and beauty services, and a designated practice classroom for business and IT studies. Planning and design works for the new Esperance campus have commenced.

### 4.3 2018 LIST OF OCCUPATIONS DIFFICULT TO FILL IN THE ESPERANCE/RAVENSTORPE REGION

Based on the findings of the Review, a list of those occupations that were considered difficult to fill in the region is included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSCO</th>
<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>133211</td>
<td>Engineering Manager [Workshop Supervisor]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321212</td>
<td>Diesel Motor Mechanic [Qualified Agricultural Mechanic]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342315</td>
<td>Electronic Instrument Trades Worker (Special Class) [Precision Farming Specialist]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Highest difficulty to recruit
(Could not recruit anyone from Western Australia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANZSCO</th>
<th>ANZSCO Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111111</td>
<td>Chief Executive or Managing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121411</td>
<td>Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222311</td>
<td>Financial Investment Adviser [Financial Planner]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232212</td>
<td>Surveyor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232611</td>
<td>Urban and Regional Planner [Town Planner]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234112</td>
<td>Agricultural Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251513</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251311</td>
<td>Environmental Health Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252312</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253111</td>
<td>General Practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321111</td>
<td>Automotive Electrician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321211</td>
<td>Motor Mechanic (General)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323211</td>
<td>Fitter (General) [Mechanical fitters]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324211</td>
<td>Vehicle Body Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>361211</td>
<td>Shearer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511112</td>
<td>Program or Project Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>591117</td>
<td>Order Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611313</td>
<td>Sales Representative (Motor Vehicle Parts and Accessories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621312</td>
<td>Motor Vehicle Parts Interpreter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZSCO</td>
<td>ANZSCO Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>721111</td>
<td>Agricultural and Horticultural Mobile Plant Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841513</td>
<td>Mixed Livestock Farm Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841515</td>
<td>Sheep Farm Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>841611</td>
<td>Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Somewhat difficult to recruit**
(Could recruit someone from the region with compromise)

**ANZSCO ANZSCO Description**
- 131114 Public Relations Manager
- 251411 Optometrist
- 322311 Metal Fabricator [Boilermaker]
- 322313 Welder
- 323313 Locksmith
- 341111 Electrician (General)
- 351311 Chef
- 421111 Senior Childcare Educator
- 421112 Family Day Care Educators
- 423111 Aged or Disabled Carer
- 423211 Dental Assistant
- 423313 Personal Care Assistant
- 431111 Bar Attendant
- 431511 Waiter
- 512111 Office Manager (General)
- 621111 Sales Assistant (General)
- 621411 Pharmacy Sales Assistant
- 631111 Checkout Operator
- 712914 Concrete Batching Plant Operators
- 721211 Earthmoving Plant Operator (General)
- 733111 Truck Driver (General)
- 732111 Delivery Driver
- 811211 Commercial Cleaner
- 811311 Domestic Cleaner
- 831211 Meat Boner and Slicer
- 831212 Slaughterer
Currently filled – Future concerns
(Occupations which are currently filled, but where employers have raised concerns about recruiting into the future)

**ANZSCO ANZSCO Description**
- 133111 Construction Project Manager [Onsite construction manager]
- 221111 Accountant
- 272611 Community Arts Worker
- 821511 Paving and Surfacing Labourers

Watch list
(Further evidence is required).

**ANZSCO ANZSCO Description**
- 271311 Solicitor
- 272311 Clinical Psychologist
- 891113 Waterside Worker [Stevedore]
4.4 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET - A SNAPSHOT

This snapshot should be read in conjunction with the 2018 Esperance-Ravensthorpe labour market profile\textsuperscript{38}.

Economy
In 2016, the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region had a residential population of 15,975 people\textsuperscript{39}. The Shire of Esperance covers over 42,000 square kilometres, and has one of the lowest population densities in Western Australia. The Town of Esperance is the regional centre. The Shire of Ravensthorpe covers 13,500 square kilometres.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry is the region’s main economic contributor and employer, providing employment to over 1,264 people\textsuperscript{40}. In addition, it provides seasonal employment opportunities at harvest time. Despite varying rainfall patterns and commodity prices, agricultural activity in Esperance and surrounding areas has remained relatively stable year to year.

Agriculture supports a range of businesses and services based in Esperance and the neighbouring Shire of Ravensthorpe. This includes the transport and logistics sectors that are involved in the movement of agricultural commodity exports to market, supported by the Esperance Port.

The Esperance Port is a key piece of infrastructure for the region, servicing the agricultural areas of the south and exporting a wide range of mineral and grain commodities. According to the Southern Ports Authority, the Esperance port handles over 200 ships per annum and more than 11 million tonnes of trade.

The retail industry was the second largest employer in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, providing work to an estimated 642 people in 2016. However, employment in the industry declined by 10.6% between 2011 and 2016.

Mining is also an important industry in the region, particularly in the Shire of Ravensthorpe, which has a nickel mining presence and a growing lithium mining sector. Total mineral production for the Shire of Ravensthorpe was valued at $446.2 million in 2017\textsuperscript{41}. Mining activity and employment in the region continues to be impacted by fluctuations in global commodity prices, particularly nickel. The mining industry provided employment to 346 people in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region in 2016 compared to 497 people working in the industry in 2011.

Tourism continues to create employment opportunities in the region. The Tourism Esperance committee have successfully developed the \textit{Experience Esperance} marketing initiative. The Esperance visitor centre reported in March 2018 that there was a significant increase in tourism numbers compared to the previous year\textsuperscript{42}.

\textsuperscript{38} dtwd.wa.gov.au/workforce-development
\textsuperscript{39} ABS 2016 Census
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Regional Resources Data, 2017
\textsuperscript{42} Shire of Esperance, Media Release 13 March 2018
This was substantiated during the Review as stakeholders reported Esperance was becoming a more popular tourist destination. The number of cruise ships docking in town, and the more prolific social media regarding its pristine beaches has also increased the town’s exposure to interstate and international visitors. This increased profile has also seen the number of small tours in the town and its surrounds increase.

A comprehensive range of support services industries including health care and social assistance, education and training, and transport, postal and warehousing also make an important contribution to the region's economy. This was reinforced by stakeholder feedback during the Review. It was also highlighted there will be strong growth in the health care and social assistance sectors with the increased demand for aged care facilities, and the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme later this year in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region.

According to the ABS, the total number of dwelling approvals in Esperance-Ravensthorpe has remained fairly consistent over the last five years, with the exception of peaks in 2013–14 (99 approvals) and 2014–15 (94 approvals). In 2016–17 there were 69 dwelling approvals granted in the region, with the majority of approvals issued in Esperance and just six in Ravensthorpe. While stakeholders confirmed the region was experiencing a subdued construction market, it was considered this would not have a dire impact on the region.

The total value of non-residential building approvals increased from almost $7 million in 2013–2014 to over $14 million in 2016–17 for the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region.

This building activity in Esperance included significant State Government funded projects such as the redevelopment of the Esperance Health Campus, which is now operational. This upgrade included a new and expanded emergency department, day surgery unit, and improved maternity services. Government funding was also provided for the expansion of the Esperance Aged Care facility which will include a new 34 bed complex providing 17 general residential and 17 secure residential (for people living with dementia) accommodation. It is expected the new complex will be completed later this year.

Other major projects in the region include a new SRT campus in Esperance where $17.9 million has been allocated in the State Budget 2018–19 for this work. There has also been $8 million allocated towards upgrading priority sections of the Coolgardie-Esperance Highway and $4.1 million for the redevelopment of the Esperance Indoor Sports Stadium.

Population
The 2016 ABS Census data showed the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region has a residential population of 15,975 people (Esperance – 14,250 people; Ravensthorpe – 1,725). The region’s age distribution is shown in Table 5.

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43 Through popular Instagram photographers posting Esperance beach images
Table 5: Esperance-Ravensthorpe population by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
<th>Esperance-Ravensthorpe</th>
<th>Esperance</th>
<th>Ravensthorpe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011 and 2016

When compared to the State overall, the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region has a slightly older population, particularly for those aged 45 years and above.

The 2016 Census data shows the resident population of the Esperance-Ravensthorpe has remained steady overall with an increase of 384 people since the 2011 Census period. The greatest population increase was among those aged 65 years or older with an increase of 508 (consisting of 256 females and 252 males). The second largest growth cohort was among the 45 to 64 year olds, with an additional 259 people (134 females and 125 males).

It was interesting to note the number of people residing in the region aged 25–44 years declined between Census periods by 182 people (35 female and 147 males). The only other cohort which experienced a population decline was females aged 0-14 years (a decrease of 227 people).

The region’s age profile was consistent with regions that are seen as attractive retirement and lifestyle communities such as the Peel and Wheatbelt, and this was substantiated by stakeholders during the Review. Young people leaving the region to pursue other employment and training opportunities was also a consistent theme during stakeholder consultations.

Almost 4% (or 620 people) of the region’s population identify as being Aboriginal, which was just slightly above the State average of 3.1%. The actual Aboriginal population in the region was likely to be higher than stated, especially in the more remote LGAs, due to issues associated with under reporting by the Aboriginal population. It was noted that due to the relatively small Aboriginal population in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe area caution must be taken when interpreting results.

The 2016 Census showed that 14.7% (2,052 persons) of the Esperance-Ravensthorpe usual resident population was born outside of Australia, half of whom were born in either England or New Zealand.
Employment
During the Review stakeholders raised concerns about the increased number of workers moving away from the region in recent years. This was supported by the ABS usual place of residence Census figures that show between 2011 and 2016 the number of employed Esperance-Ravensthorpe residents decreased from 7,424 persons (Esperance: 6,356; Ravensthorpe: 1,068) to 7,162 (Esperance: 6,383; Ravensthorpe: 779), representing an decrease of 3.5%.44

As illustrated in Figure 9, in 2016 the main employing industries across the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region were agriculture, forestry and fishing (1,264 workers), followed by retail trade (642 workers) and education and training (614 workers).

Within the LGA of Esperance, agriculture, forestry and fishing (1,002 workers) was the dominant employing industry. For Ravensthorpe, the main employing industries in 2016 were agriculture, forestry and fishing (213 workers) and mining (154 workers). Of interest, the number of Ravensthorpe residents who were employed in the mining industry in 2016 was around half the number employed (301 workers) in 2011.

Stakeholders confirmed the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry was experiencing strong growth in both livestock and grain production. Feedback also suggested while this growth was positive, the industry’s workforce will be impacted by technological advances and changing farm practices in the future.

Stakeholders also advised there may be an impact on the industry’s live sheep trade should the Commonwealth Government change how trade operates. If the live export trade is banned, the local abattoirs would need to increase its workforce capacity to process the increased number of sheep.

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44 ABS Census 2011 and 2016
According to the 2016 Census, the top ten occupations (six-digit ANZSCO) in Esperance-Ravensthorpe were:

621111  Sales Assistant (General) (304 workers)
121214  Grain, Oilseed or Pasture Grower (264 workers)
121411  Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmer (263 workers)
733111  Truck Driver (General) (188 workers)
531111  General Clerk (139 workers)
241213  Primary School Teacher (129 workers)
323211  Fitter (General) (124 workers)
811211  Commercial Cleaner (121 workers)
241411  Secondary School Teacher (118 workers)
142111  Retail Manager (General) (110 workers)
At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 6,891 people employed in jobs located within Esperance-Ravensthorpe (Esperance: 5,895 and Ravensthorpe: 996), with 347 workers (or 5%) residing outside the region.

As shown in Figure 10, Ravensthorpe had 236 employees and Esperance had 111 employees who resided outside of the respective towns.

Conversely, the LGA’s of Kalgoorlie (31 people), Coolgardie (21 people), East Pilbara (14 people), Ashburton (13 people) and Leonora (12 people) has the largest number of jobs filled by people who live inside the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region.

**Figure 10: Esperance-Ravensthorpe workforce – By place of residence, 2016**

Of the 7,162 residents employed in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, 2,964 people, or 41.4% of the workforce were aged 45 to 64 years. This was marginally higher than the State average of 36.5%.

According to Census 2016, the number of employees within this cohort increased in the agriculture, forestry and fishing, education and training, and transport, postal and warehousing industries since 2011.

People aged 25 to 44 years represented 38.3% (2,732 people) of the Esperance-Ravensthorpe workforce, compared to 38.1% of the State’s workforce.

Among the young people cohort of the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, 513 residents (aged 15 to 19 years), and 528 residents (aged 20 to 24 years) were employed.
The retail industry was the largest employer of young people, followed by accommodation and food services, and the construction industry in 2016.

In 2016, there were 127 Aboriginal residents employed in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region, down from 153 people in 2011.

Of significance, was the cohort of young Aboriginal people moving into the workforce within the Esperance-Ravensthorpe region. The 2016 Census indicated that approximately 58.6% of the region’s total Aboriginal population was aged 24 years or younger.

The health care and social assistance industry was the largest employer of Aboriginal people in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe, providing employment to 19 Aboriginal people in 2016, up from nine in 2011, however, this only represents 3.2% of the 602 people employed in this industry. The industry areas of education and training (14 persons), agriculture, forestry and fishing (11 persons), and public administration and safety (11 persons) also feature prominently as employers of Aboriginal people.

The most recently available Small Area Labour Market (SALM) data\(^{45}\) indicates the unemployment rate for the Esperance-Ravensthorpe area decreased from 3.5% to 3.1% over a 12 month period to December 2017 (well below the State average of 5.9%). In Esperance, the unemployment rate decreased from 3.7% in December 2016 to 3.3% in December 2017. In Ravensthorpe, the unemployment rate decreased from 2.5% in December 2016 to 2% in December 2017.

During the Review, employers and stakeholders suggested that the low unemployment rate was contributing to the difficulties in recruiting local people into vacant positions. This was over and above other issues raised by employers which were outlined earlier in this report.

According to the 2016 ABS Census the unemployment rate of Aboriginal people in the Esperance-Ravensthorpe was 20.4%, up from 15.2% in 2011. At a State level, the unemployment rate of Aboriginal people increased to 22.2% in 2016, up from 17.8% in 2011. The number of employed Esperance-Ravensthorpe based Aboriginal residents decreased from 153 in 2011 to 127 in 2016.

\(^{45}\) Caution should be used when examining LGA level Small Area Labour Market (SALM) data due to small population variability in the data.
5 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the Great Southern-Esperance labour market review involved the following stages.

- Undertake desktop research (including DTWD’s Great Southern and Esperance Labour Market Profile).
- Conduct targeted interviews with employers and key stakeholders using a structured interview questionnaire – the list of employers was compiled using recommendations from the local Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and DTWD’s regional stakeholder list. Additional employers were identified through a review of the SEEK website to identify employers currently recruiting in the Great Southern-Esperance regions.
- Document and analyse interview responses.
- Prepare draft findings and region specific occupation lists.
- Validate findings during visits to Albany, Denmark, Katanning, Mt Barker, Kojonup, and Esperance.
- Prepare a report with findings.
- Update the Great Southern and Esperance labour market profiles46.

This Review was undertaken between February and July 2018 and gathered information on:

- current and future labour market trends;
- occupations that employers and stakeholders considered to be difficult to recruit into; and
- issues relating to training, and the attraction, recruitment and retention of workers in the region.

For the Great Southern, a total of 71 organisations from a variety of business sizes across the 19 industry areas47 as classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) were targeted and invited by email and/or phone to be interviewed as part of this Review. Of these, 41 private sector employers agreed to participate in a telephone or face-to-face interview. In addition, nine industry peak bodies, eight State government and local government agencies, one university and three training organisations were interviewed.

For Esperance-Ravensthorpe, a total of 56 organisations were invited to participate in the Review. Of these, 41 private sector employers agreed to participate in a telephone or face-to-face interview. In addition, eight industry peak bodies, five State government and local government agencies and two training organisations were interviewed.

To validate the preliminary findings of the interviews and consultations, DTWD, accompanied by a representative from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), met with a range of stakeholders over two days in Albany and Denmark to seek their feedback in relation to the veracity of the draft occupation list and labour market findings. DTWD also met with stakeholders in Katanning, Mt Barker, and Kojonup.

46 dtwd.wa.gov.au/workforce-development
47 As per the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006
Validation visits were also conducted in Esperance. During these visits, DTWD was accompanied by the SRT’s Esperance campus manager. Being relatively new to this role, these visits provided the campus manager with the opportunity to create links with key local stakeholders.

A list of all organisations consulted for the Great Southern and Esperance Review is included in Appendix A.
6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

A primary purpose of the Great Southern and Esperance labour market review was to develop a list of occupations difficult to fill in each region which will guide the training priorities of the local TAFE so that its delivery aligns with the needs of the region’s labour market. This was an election commitment of the State Government.

The list of occupations included in this report has been developed in consultation with SRT. SRT has confirmed the outcomes of this report will assist in the review of their training currently being delivered in the Great Southern and Esperance regions. Where perceived training gaps have been identified in the report, SRT will use this information to increase marketing efforts to promote the available training that meets the needs of industry and the community.

Further, SRT has indicated future Reviews and updates to the list of occupations will provide a useful basis for the annual Delivery and Performance Agreement discussions between DTWD and the SRT on funding and training priorities in the Great Southern and Esperance-Ravensthorpe regions.

DTWD will continue to work with SRT on implementing the training related findings of this Review.

DTWD will also provide copies of this report to stakeholders and continue its engagement with relevant stakeholders including the Great Southern Development Commission and Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission in respect to those findings that are not directly related to training. Other stakeholders such as the Jobs and Skill Centres, Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and other Commonwealth agencies who may find the report relevant to their work will also be provided with a copy.
## 7 APPENDIX A - CONSULTATION LIST FOR GREAT SOUTHERN AND ESPERANCE LABOUR MARKET REVIEW

Consultations were held with 128 stakeholders as part of the Great Southern/Esperance labour market review. These included face-to-face and telephone discussions in Albany, Denmark, Katanning, Mt Barker, Kojonup, Esperance and Perth.

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<th>Budget Australia - Albany</th>
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